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ABSTRACT

In the context of a regular academic program, the Child Development Project (CDP) helps teachers and parents promote characteristics such as helpfulness and responsibility in children in kindergarten through sixth grade. The CDP program contains five major elements: (1) cooperative activities; (2) helping activities; (3) the highlighting of prosocial values; (4) promotion of social understanding; and (5) a teaching approach to discipline. This packet contains samples of curriculum materials for family homework activities, cooperative lessons, and literature-based reading units. The family homework materials, which are assigned by teachers about twice a month, describe activities parents and children can do together. The cooperative lessons involve group writing. These lessons are constructed in such a way that they foster interdependence among group members. The reading unit materials are of two types. In units to be read aloud, the teacher reads a story to the class and then assigns selected activities to heighten students' understanding of the issues raised in the story. In units for partners to work on together, children practice what the teacher has modeled through discussion, writing, and editing activities with a partner. Both types of units are designed to promote children's reading development, thinking skills, and empathic responsiveness. Samples of the units are provided. (BC)

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The Child Development Project

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Thank you for your interest in the Child Development Project. Enclosed are sample curriculum materials in the three areas where we have concentrated our development and field-testing efforts.

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FAMILY HOMEWORK ACTIVITIES. These low-keyed activities are done by parents and children working together. Teachers send these home about twice a month, in place of "regular" homework. The activities are explicitly related to the curriculum, either as an extension of work students have already done, or as preparation for a suggested classroom activity. The family activities capitalize on common types of parent-child interaction, such as reading and talking together, and focus on developing an exchange of viewpoints to heighten an understanding of one another's values while also relating to an academic goal.

COOPERATIVE LESSONS. The lessons included are part of a series of cooperative "templates" that can be laid over different content. Each template includes suggestions to help students see personal/intrinsic reasons for working hard on the lesson and to be aware of the democratic values that will be especially relevant in completing the lesson. Interdependence among group members is built into the design of each template, and at the upper grades children are also assigned specific interdependent roles. At the end of each lesson there are suggestions for encouraging students to think about what they learned and how they worked together.

LITERATURE-BASED READING UNITS. The works of literature these units are based on are selected for their richness in raising ideas about what it means to be caring, responsible, and principled; for the insights they provide into the perspectives and situations of diverse others; and for their relevance to universal feelings and choices that children face.

Included are samples of two distinctive kinds of literature units: "Read-Aloud Units" for grades K-6 and units for partners to work on together, either "Partner Reading Units" for grades K-3 or "L.I.T. Units" for grades 4-6. Each kind of unit is designed to promote children's development and motivation as readers, their higher-order thinking skills, their empathic responsiveness, and their deeper understanding of the issues and values that literature explores. With the read-alouds, the teacher reads to the class, guides them in discussing significant issues raised by the work, and assigns selected activities to heighten students' understanding of these issues. The teacher models how to question and think about a work of literature in order to comprehend and appreciate its central issues. In the partner units children practice what the teacher has modeled as they complete discussion, writing, and editing activities with a partner.

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through the example of adults and older peers, children see others being principled, being kind and considerate, taking responsibility, and helping.

Promoting social understanding. Children participate in activities that help them learn to consider the perspectives, intentions, and needs of other people, including people of diverse ages, cultures, and situations.

A teaching approach to discipline. Children are helped to see themselves as part of a respectful classroom community. They are led to understand the general principles behind rules, to take responsibility for various aspects of classroom life, and to participate in decision-making. Discipline practices center around explanation appropriate to the child's developmental level and mutual problem solving rather than externally imposed rewards and punishments.

The Child Development Project has been cited as exemplary by the American Association of School Administrators, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National School Board Association, and several state departments of education, including California and New York. CDP has also been certified as effective by the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel.

Ongoing program evaluation involves researchers in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting a large body of data obtained from observations of classrooms; parent, teacher, and child questionnaires; and interviews of students, parents, teachers, and principals. Reports of these research findings are being published in leading academic and educational journals and are available from the Developmental Studies Center.

The project includes a staff development program, parent support materials, and K-6 curriculum materials for implementing the program in schools. Samples of these materials are available.

The Child Development Project is funded by an eleven-year grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation of Menlo Park, California.

Child Development Project

Within the context of an elementary school's regular academic program, the Child Development Project (CDP) helps teachers and parents promote characteristics such as helpfulness, fairness, and responsibility in children.

Drawing on national research, CDP designed ways to build school and home environments that promote a healthy balance between concern for self and concern for the rights and needs of others. By focusing on children's positive qualities and strengthening them, the project hopes to create a foundation from which children can develop as good citizens and successful adults in their work, social, and personal lives.

CDP has been centered since 1982 in a suburban San Francisco school district, and was expanded in 1988 to a nearby multiethnic, urban school district. National dissemination to eight new sites is planned.

Currently, children in seven elementary schools participate in the project's school and home programs; children in six other schools serve as a comparison group. Of the dozens of ways the program's effectiveness is being measured, a number of them show significant effects favoring the program children. Among these, program children demonstrate:

- More spontaneous helping and cooperation in the classroom;
- Better skills in dealing with hypothetical social problems and conflicts;
- Stronger adherence to democratic values.
- Less loneliness and social anxiety in school;
- Better scores on an Educational Testing Service test of higher-order reading comprehension.

There are five major CDP elements that become part of the regular academic curriculum. None of the elements is revolutionary or new, but when combined in a consistent way in school and at home, they provide children with the guidance and support they need to develop intellectually, morally, and socially.

Cooperative activities. In classrooms children do many academic lessons in small cooperative groups. Opportunities for informal classroom cooperation are also regularly provided, and the school sponsors activities involving parent-child cooperation. Cooperative activities provide children with a forum for experiencing and practicing such things as being fair, taking responsibility for one's actions, and understanding the perspectives of others.

Helping activities. Children have regular opportunities to help with home and classroom chores, tutoring and "buddy" programs, and community service, so that these activities become accepted and expected parts of school and home life.

Highlighting prosocial values. Through carefully selected literature and films, and

THOSE WERE THE DAYS . . . Grade K

Briefly describe your child's reaction to this activity:

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

Please return this page and your child's drawing to school.
Thank you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

June is a time to remember all of the wild and wonderful things that happened during the school year and to reflect on what was learned and accomplished during the course of the year. In this family activity, you can help your child develop a sense of historical time by asking him or her to remember and share with you significant events from the school year. You can also develop a sense of family history and continuity by sharing some memories that you have from kindergarten.

Questions are included to help you and your child structure a discussion, but as always, feel free to follow whatever topics interest you. After your discussion, please have your child draw a picture–either of something you related about your own early school experience or of something your child would like to remember about his or her kindergarten experience. Please return the drawing and your comments about this activity to school.

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Discussion Starters

1. Ask your child to tell you about things that happened during the past year in kindergarten. Most will want to talk about the present. To help your child think about the passage of time, try asking about the first three weeks of school, the changing of the seasons, and holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Valentine's Day.

2. Ask your child to describe some of the important and/or interesting things he or she learned in kindergarten.

3. Invite your child to ask you questions about what kindergarten was like for you. If your child has difficulty coming up with questions (this is a communication skill which is still undergoing considerable development), feel free to make suggestions about things you could talk about. For example, ask: Would you like to hear about my teacher? How about the kids? Would you like to hear about the best thing that happened to me? Would you like to hear about the worst thing that happened to me?

Drawing Activity

Ask your child to draw a picture–either showing something that happened to you in kindergarten or showing something that he or she would like to remember about kindergarten. Have him or her bring the drawing back to share with the class. (Have your child use the space below or a separate piece of paper.)

Californians, Part II

Briefly describe your child's reaction to this activity:

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

Please return this page and the completed interview to school.
Thank you.

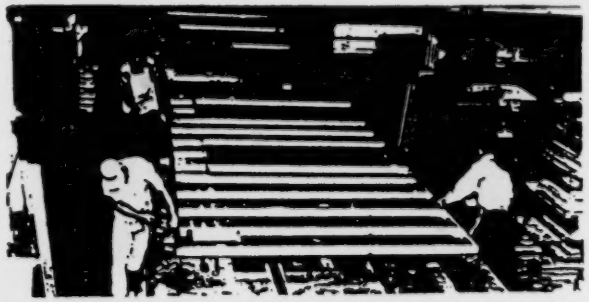
FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

In our studies of *California, Yesterday and Today*, we will be focusing on some of the businesses and industries that make California one of the most important states in our country. Californians who work both inside and outside of the home contribute to many different aspects of our communities and our state's economy.

Please help our class learn more about the work that Californians do by participating in the following interview with your child. (Your child may choose to conduct only one interview, but we welcome interviews of both parents.)

Have your child ask you the interview questions as a means of starting a discussion. After the discussion, have your child briefly write your answers to each question, either in the space provided inside or on a separate sheet of paper. Please return the written answers and your comments to school.



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TO THE STUDENT

Californians do many different kinds of jobs, both inside and outside the home. The work they do helps make California a helathy, growing state.

Please use the following questions to find out about the work your parent(s) do(es).

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you call the work that you do?

2. What kinds of things do you do when you are working? Please describe a typical working day.

3. In what ways does your work help other people?

   What goods or services do you (or your company or organization) provide?

4. Did you need any special preparation or training for your work? If so what was it?

5 If you could do any work in the world, what would it be? Why?

USING

WAY DOWN IN THE MUSIC

IN CLASS

Before sending this family activity home:

Have your class use the family activity interview to learn about your own past and present tastes in music. Encourage students to add questions to the interview.

Explain that when students interview their parents they should take notes so that they can each write a comparison in class between their own musical taste and their parent's.

After students bring their interview notes back to class:

Explain the writing assignment. Have students choose to write a comparison of:

- their parent's musical taste and their own taste at the same age

or

- their parent's and their own taste now.

WAY DOWN IN THE MUSIC

Student comments, reactions, or suggestions:

Parent comments, reactions, or suggestions:

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

Please return this page and your child's interview notes to school. Thank you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

The poem inside, "Way Down in the Music," describes how the poet feels about her favorite music. Please read the poem with your child as an introduction to this family activity about tastes and times in popular music – yours and your child's.

Explore with your child the similarities and differences in the music your child likes now and the music you liked at this same age (or the music you like now). Play each other favorite pieces of music and explain what you like about them.

As preparation for a classroom writing assignment, have your child interview you and take notes about the similarities and differences in your musical tastes and some possible explanations for them.

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Way Down in the Music

I get way down in the music
Down inside the music
I let it wake me
take me
Spin me around and make me
Uh-get down

Inside the sound of the Jackson Five
Into the tune of Earth, Wind and Fire
Down in the bass where the beat comes from
Down in the horn and down in the drum
I get down
I get down

I get way down in the music
Down inside the music
I let it wake me
take me
Spin me around and shake me
I get down, down
I get down

Eloise Greenfield

© 1978 by Eloise Greenfield for "Way Down in the Music," from *Honey, I Love*, Harper & Row.

Parent Interview

TO THE STUDENT: Please interview your parent about his or her taste in music. Jot down notes on a separate piece of paper to help you write a comparison in class of your musical tastes.

1. What was the culture like when your favorite oldies were at the top of the charts? What were the styles like? The dances?

2. What were your favorite songs? What did you like about them? Do any of them bring back specific memories?

3. How are the songs different now from when you were growing up? How are they similar?

4. In what ways is the music you like now different from the music you liked when you were my age? In what ways is it similar?

5. What is it about the music you like now that makes you like it?

6. _____

_____

7. _____

_____

Free Verse Poem

Free Verse Poem.

Because free verse doesn't have a rigid structure, it is ideal for young children's early writing. For example, lines can be of any length, they can be repeated, and "sentences" can be incomplete. Encouraging the children to choose the line order according to their own developing sense of aesthetics will also help them develop their ear for the flow of language.

In this activity children share thoughts and experiences related to the topic and help one another write lines that they then arrange to form a free verse poem.

Directions for Student Groups.

Talk over the topic and tell each other what it makes you think of. *(Students should be encouraged to tell one another a personal story about the topic.)*

Share ideas about what to include in the poem. *(Groups should be sure everyone's ideas are heard.)*

Each of you decide what you would like to write for your sentence. *(Students may write, copy, or dictate their sentences on separate strips of paper. While working on their lines, students should be encouraged to ask each other for help.)*

Decide on an order for all your group's sentences. *(Reading different arrangements aloud may help.)* Tape or glue your sentences onto a background piece of paper.

For Groups That Finish Early.

Add a title and decorate your poem.

Variation.

Repeat Free Verse Poem, using a common class experience, such as a field trip or a particular lesson, as the topic.

Extension.

Precede or follow this activity with a group collage on the same subject. Display the poems and collages together.

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1. Introducing the Lesson.

Motivation/Purpose
Select a topic that will interest the students and evoke many associations and descriptions, such as summer, pizza, or friends.

To help students focus on the topic, lead them through a guided imagery experience. Suggest that they imagine in detail the smells, sounds, tastes, and feelings they associate with the topic. Ask a few volunteers to share one of their experiences with the class.

Introducing the Task
Explain the task to students fully, modeling aspects you think they may not understand.

Social Focus *(Choose one or more.)*
Kindness and Consideration:
Ask students for examples of ways they can help each other in this activity. Ask them why and how they might be sure that a group member wants help before they give it. Ask students for ways they might ask for help.

Fairness:
Ask groups to share their experiences or ideas about the topic before they write their sentences. Ask students how they might be sure that everyone's ideas are heard.

2. Group Work.

Observation and Intervention
Observe, take notes, and intervene, as appropriate. Help groups monitor their time. Look for examples of students helping each other. Watch to see whether everyone's ideas are heard during the group's sharing. If necessary, intervene with questions, or model ways of including group members who are being left out of the discussion.

3. Lesson Wrap-Up.

Share Learning or Group Product
Ask groups to read their poems to the class. One person from the group may read the entire poem, or each group member may read the line he or she wrote. Ask volunteers to tell why they described the topic the way they did.

Reflect on Social Learning
Discuss groups' interactions and their relative success with the lesson's social focus. Ask, for example:

Q. Did anyone help you in a way that made you feel good?
Q. Did anyone ask you for help in a way that made you feel good?
Q. What problem did your group have in helping each other and how did your group solve the problem?
Q. How did your group make sure everyone's ideas were listened to?

Letter to a Story Character

Letter to a Story Character.

Letter writing gives students practice writing for a specific audience. Writing to a story character can also help students deepen their understanding of a story while providing an engaging way to practice writing. In this activity students talk together about what they would like to tell or ask a story character, and why. Then each student contributes one sentence to a letter.

Special Considerations.

Don't let students get sidetracked with issues of letter format. They are simply writing an informal letter to a friend.

Directions for Student Groups.

Talk together about the things you would like to ask or tell the character. *(Be sure everyone has a chance to say what he or she would like to ask or tell.)*

Each of you write your own part on a strip of paper. *(While students are writing, they should be encouraged to ask for and give each other help.)*

Decide on an order for arranging the sentences. *(Rearranging the strips in different orders and reading the parts aloud may help.)*

Glue the strips onto a piece of paper and sign your names at the bottom of the letter.

For Groups That Finish Early.

Decorate your letter.

Decide what the character might say if he or she were to answer the letter.

Extensions.

What did they say? Groups can exchange letters and compose a response from the point of view of the character.

Thank yous. Groups can write letters to thank a classroom visitor or aide, to show appreciation or provide responses to a school assembly, or to give comments or ask questions to the author of a book.

Individual Letters. Have students follow the same procedure of talking in their groups about what they would like to say to a story character and why. Then have students write individual letters, helping one another as needed.

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1. Introducing the Lesson.

Motivation/Purpose

Select a story to read to the class that makes students curious to know more about one of the characters. After reading the story twice and discussing it, ask students to tell what they might ask or say to one of the characters if they could.

Introducing the Task

Tell students they will be writing a letter to one of the characters (you may want to choose the character). Explain that you will be giving each group a piece of paper that says "Dear _____" (with the name of the character) and several blank strips of paper. Describe the group task and, if necessary, model any steps that might cause difficulty. For example, you might help the students generate a list of questions or comments for the character, and model using them to write a letter.

Social Focus *(Choose one or more.)*

Kindness and Consideration:

Explain to students that it will be important for them to talk with and help one another as they write their sentences. (This will make it easier for individuals to ask for and give help.) Ask students to suggest the kinds of help they might need.

Fairness:

When groups discuss ideas to include in the letter, they will want to be sure everyone has had a chance to tell the group what he or she would like to tell or ask the character. Ask students why it is important for everyone to have a chance to tell the group what he or she wants to say or ask, and ask them to suggest ways to make sure this happens.

2. Group Work.

Observation and Intervention

Look for examples of students helping each other. Be prepared to encourage students to seek help from their group. Watch to see that groups are including everyone. If some children are being excluded, try asking the group what they are doing to include everyone. You may want to model asking questions that help draw everyone into the discussion.

3. Lesson Wrap-Up.

Share Learning or Group Product

Ask reporters to read their group's letter to the class. Choose one or two questions or comments to focus on (ones that several groups included or one that seems particularly important to understanding the story), and have the groups describe their thinking and invite others' comments.

Reflect on Social Learning

(*Select the most appropriate focus for your class.*)

Fairness:

Help students think about how they made sure everyone's ideas were heard. For example, ask:

Q. Did anyone in your group encourage you to tell about your ideas? How?

Kindness and Consideration:

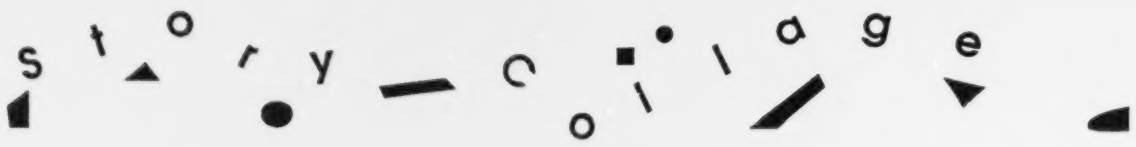
Ask students to think about a time during the activity when someone helped them. Have them recall details about the incident. For example, ask:

Q. What kind of help did the person give you?
Q. How did it make you feel?
Q. Did you ask for help or did the person offer it on their own?

Have students share their experience with their group, and then ask a couple of volunteers to share with the whole class.

Discuss as a class any problems groups might have had helping each other. For example, ask:

Q. Did your group have any problems helping each other?
Q. What was the problem?
Q. Why do you think it was a problem?
Q. What can you do next time to make it easier?



Story Collage.

Many stories contain scenes that students enjoy illustrating. In this activity each small group of students creates a collage to illustrate a scene from a story. As students work to design and create their collage, they not only develop their graphic skills, they also gain an appreciation of the author's descriptive style and deepen their understanding of the story. The audience for the collage might be a younger class or buddies class, parents (at parents' night), or another class.

Directions for Student Groups.

Brainstorm ideas for illustrating a scene, including background, characters, and objects. *(Scenes may be assigned or chosen by the group. If the collage is for a special audience, students should consider which ideas are appropriate for that audience.)*

Decide who will make which parts of the collage. *(While working on their parts, students should be encouraged to offer and ask for help from each other.)*

Decide on an arrangement and place all parts on the background. *(Everyone should agree on placement before gluing on the parts. Groups may add a caption or title to the collage.)*

For Groups That Finish Early.

Write a short paragraph that explains why you chose the scene you did.

Discuss and be prepared to describe the hardest or best decision you made in planning and constructing the collage.

Extension.

Telling the Whole Story. As a class, decide on an order for the group collages. Display the collages on a bulletin board or in a book.

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1. Introducing the Lesson.

Motivation/Purpose

Choose a story that has wild or fantastic scenes, such as "How They Broke Away to Go to the Rootabaga Country," from *Rootabaga Stories;* vivid descriptions, such as *Sarah, Plain and Tall;* or complex and intriguing scenes, such as *Tuck Everlasting.* After introducing the story with motivational questions and activities, read the story to the students, or have them read it in pairs.

Explain the purpose(s) for doing the collage; for example, to help parents know about the stories the class reads, to help students "see" and understand the story better, to practice and develop skills of illustrating or of following an author's words to depict something he or she described.

Introducing the Task

Have the class brainstorm a list of scenes that would be good to illustrate for the intended audience. The list should include several more scenes than there are groups.

Explain the steps groups will go through, modeling aspects of the task that may cause difficulty.

Social Focus: Fairness

Students will be making group decisions in this activity, beginning with what scene to illustrate. Ask students what other decisions they will have to make (deciding what to include in the collage, how to share the work, and how to make sure everyone's contribution fits). Ask them how they can be fair in making these decisions.

2. Group Work.

Observation and Intervention

Make sure the groups make their decisions as a group (for example, deciding on backgrounds, characters, and objects to include in the collage; deciding who will make what parts of the collage; and deciding how the parts will fit together).

Note the ways groups make decisions (both fair and unfair) and ways they work together.

Groups will have different ways of dividing the task. Note these during group work to help them describe their approaches during lesson wrap-up.

3. Lesson Wrap-Up.

(Incorporate at least two of the three categories.)

Share Learning or Group Product

Have groups display their collages and point out highlights. If collages are for a special audience, ask the reporters to tell how their groups' collages are especially suited to that audience. Encourage the class to ask questions about each collage.

If two or more groups illustrated the same scene, help the students, through questions and discussion, to appreciate the validity of different points of view or approaches. (You might ask two groups to volunteer for each scene and in the lesson wrap-up have the two groups discuss the similarities and differences in their approaches to the same scene.)

Share Strategies for Approaching the Task

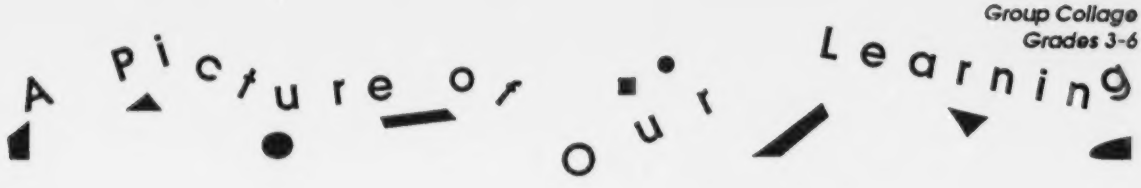
Ask questions that will help students see that there are a variety of good strategies for approaching the task, for example:

Q. How did you choose the scene you did?
Q. What did you do after you listed all the ideas?
Q. How did you decide who would make which parts?

Reflect on Social Learning

Ask groups to describe their decision-making process and why they thought it was fair. If you observed a group making a decision in a fair way, encourage that group to share their approach. Ask questions to help groups reflect, such as:

Q. Did you have any ideas for making decisions that you decided wouldn't be fair?
Q. If your group had problems making a decision, why might you have had difficulties?



A Picture of Our Learning.

The end of a unit of study, such as a social studies or science unit, is a perfect time for students to reflect on and celebrate their learning. In this activity, groups of students construct a collage to illustrate important or interesting things they have learned. As part of the process, students will need to summarize, categorize, and evaluate what they learned, offering justifications for their choices. In addition to helping students remember the content of the unit, this activity carries the strong message that the major goals of learning tasks go beyond a good performance on a unit test.

Directions for Student Groups.

Make a list of the important or interesting things your group learned in this unit and talk about why you think each is important or interesting. *(Students should ask each other questions to help each other with their thinking.)*

Decide what to include in your collage. *(Each group may choose to include several things or focus on one major aspect.)*

Decide who will make which parts of the collage. *(While working on their parts, individuals should be encouraged to offer and ask for help from each other.)*

Decide on an arrangement and place all your parts on the background. *(Everyone should agree on placement before gluing parts. Groups may add a caption or title to the collage.)*

For Groups That Finish Early.

Choose one important idea from the unit and be ready to explain to the class why you chose to illustrate it.

Variation.

The Year in Review. As a way to provide closure to a full year of working together, make group collages that represent experiences that were shared by the class throughout the year.

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1. Introducing the Lesson.

Motivation/Purpose

Explain the purpose(s) for making the collage and for recalling the unit; for example, to help students remember and celebrate all they have learned or to show visitors on parents' night what the students have learned about the topic.

Have the class recall things they have learned during the unit. (It may be fun for students to remember misconceptions they have corrected.) Take time to reminisce, when appropriate.

Introducing the Task

Explain the task and provide written group directions (on the board or as a handout).

Social Focus *(Choose one or more.)*

Fairness:

Students will need to make many group decisions in this activity. Ask them to list the decisions they will need to make, and have them brainstorm strategies they might use to make fair decisions.

Kindness and Consideration:

Tell students that in this activity they will need to give reasons why they think something is important, and let them know that giving reasons will sometimes be difficult. Explain that one way to be kind and considerate to their group members is to listen carefully and help one another to express their ideas. Ask for suggestions for how they might help group members express their ideas.

2. Group Work.

Observation and Intervention

Make sure that the groups make their decisions as a group before they begin the illustration process.

Watch for examples of how students respond to each other's ideas. Watch especially for instances when they help clarify each other's thinking.

Look for things that students seem most pleased about having learned and listen for the kinds of reasons they give for including these things.

3. Lesson Wrap-Up.

(Incorporate at least two of the four categories.)

Share the Learning or Group Product

Have groups display their collages. Ask reporters to share their reasons for including the things they did. Encourage the class to ask questions about and show appreciation for each collage.

Help students recognize that their reasons for including various things on their collage may be quite different (for example, personal relevance, or that something was surprising to them).

Share Strategies for Approaching the Task

Ask questions that will help students see that there are a variety of ways groups could have approached the task, for example:

Q. What did you do after you listed all the ideas?
Q. How did you divide the work? Why did you decide to divide it that way?
Q. What were the advantages and disadvantages of dividing the work the way you did?

Reflect on Social Learning

Decision-Making:

Ask groups to share their decision-making process. Ask questions such as:

Q. How did you make decisions in a way that was fair to all group members?
Q. Did you have any ideas for making decisions that you decided wouldn't be fair?

Reflect on Social Learning

Helping Others Express Their Thinking:

Ask volunteers for examples of when someone helped them express their thinking. Ask, for example:

Q. What did the person do?
Q. How did that help you?

GROUP COLLAGE

Grades 3-6

Collage can add variety to the core academic program and simultaneously help develop students' graphic abilities. Although students ordinarily use writing and speaking to consolidate or convey their knowledge, collage is an excellent alternative. It is a challenging art form for the most able students, yet students with limited coordination or graphic abilities can also achieve success. In this activity, groups of students help one another reconstruct and symbolically represent their shared knowledge or experience as they make joint decisions about how to illustrate, for example, a story, a social studies unit, or a field trip.

Academic Focus.

Art:

- Using symbols to convey ideas
- Developing an understanding of the elements and principles of design and composition
- Building aesthetic appreciation

Content Area:

- Is dependent on the subject of the collage

Thinking Skills:

- Categorization
- Recognizing main ideas and supporting details
- Interpretation
- Remembering

Social Focus.

(Choose a focus appropriate for your class.)

Kindness and Consideration:

- Responding kindly and considerately to the work of other group members

Fairness:

- Deciding fairly what to include in the collage and how to divide the task

Responsibility:

- Completing an individual part so that the group collage can be made

The Group Collage Process.

Groups brainstorm ideas for illustrating their topic.

Individual group members make their parts.

The group decides how to arrange the parts on the collage.

Special Considerations.

Collage is a successful beginning as well as advanced cooperative activity. As students' collaborative skills increase with succeeding collage activities, they will experience the natural reward of more interesting and attractive products.

Possible Roles.

Facilitator
Materials Manager
Brainstorm Recorder
Reporter

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Activity Index

Lessons

Story Collage.
After reading or listening to a story, students create a collage to illustrate the story. (See following pages.)
Grades 3-6

A Picture of Our Learning.
As a review of a social studies or science unit, students create a collage to record what they have learned in the unit. (See following pages.)
Grades 3-6

Remember When.
Students create a collage to help them recall shared experiences. (See following pages.)
Grades 3-6

Activity Ideas

Buddy Collage.
Following shared or similar experiences, like studying the same subject, hearing the same story, or attending an assembly or field trip together, have pairs of buddies construct a collage to represent their joint impressions.

Mobiles.
Have students construct mobiles to represent a story, unit of study, or other shared experience. Students may bend pipe cleaners or cut construction paper into desired shapes and then suspend the forms from hangers with string.

Fitting the Puzzle.
Have groups of students illustrate different aspects of a story or unit by drawing on separate pieces of butcher paper precut into puzzle pieces. Have groups then fit the pieces together to make a class puzzle that represents the whole story or unit.

GROUP WRITING

Grades K-3

We usually think of writing as a solo endeavor. We may have images of writers sequestering themselves in order to write in isolation. In reality, much writing is created collaboratively—with two or more people sharing ideas, information, expertise, and even the writing itself.

Group writing can be a satisfying activity for students because it enables them to contribute to a whole writing piece that is beyond the ability of any one group member. Group members can learn from and help each other in many aspects of writing, such as developing ideas, composing sentences, and refining language use. In these activities individual students contribute their own writing to a group product such as a letter or word collage. Students write on separate strips of paper so that the group can experiment with the arrangement to decide on their final product.

Prewriters as well as writers can do these activities. For example, depending on your teaching approach, kindergarten and early-first-grade students may write their parts using invented spelling, dictation, or copying.

ACADEMIC FOCUS.

Language Arts:
- Building language appreciation
- Building writing fluency

Thinking Skills:
- Organizing ideas

SOCIAL FOCUS.

(Choose a focus appropriate for your class.)

Kindness and Consideration:
- Helping each other
- Treating each other's work and ideas with respect

Fairness:
- Making sure everyone's ideas are heard
- Making fair decisions

THE GROUP WRITING PROCESS.

Groups brainstorm ideas for writing about their topic.

Individual group members write (dictate, or copy) their own parts, one per strip of paper.

The group combines the parts and glues them onto a piece of paper.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

These activities may be done in partners or in groups of three to four. Because students work independently and then fit their independent products together, even children unskilled in collaboration can work successfully in a group.

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Activity Index

Lessons

Word Collage.
Using words that come to mind about a given topic, students create a collage to represent the topic. (See following pages.)
Grades K-1

Free Verse Poem.
Students write a group poem by each contributing one line. (See following pages.)
Grades K-3

Letter to a Story Character.
Writing to a character in a story the class has read, each student contributes a sentence to a group letter. (See following pages.)
Grades K-3

At The Home

in Throwing Shadows by E. L. Konigsburg

DRAFT
WARNING DO NOT PHOTOCOPY

Read-Aloud Guide
Suggested Grade Range: 6-9

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SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

Phillip is a bright young boy whose self-concern and narrow view of his own importance are gradually affected by the things he learns at the "old folks home." Sidelined by a broken arm from skateboarding with his friends, circumstances draw Phillip into a relationship with a cunning old woman whose history of her life in war-torn Europe he begins to record. Day after day he returns to the home to learn the next installment of Miss Ilona's story. And day by day his exposure to Miss Ilona and other residents of the home awakens his compassion, enlarges his understanding, and draws him into an awareness of his personal membership in a world community. Through Phillip's eyes, the reader slowly grows to understands what Phillip slowly grows to understand: courage, humor, and compassion are fine things at any age.

Please note: This story mentions some historic events which were and remain significant, provocative, and tragic – the occupation of France, the horror of Nazi Germany, the annihilation of the Jews, and Hungary's post-war government and aborted revolution. In this story, these events help explain how some of the major characters became the people they are, but they are not the focus of the story and consequently they are not the focus of the class discussion. This story focuses on the loneliness all of us feel, the need we have for recognition and love, and the longing we feel to be part of a warm, cohesive community. We are not ignoring major world events by not provoking discussion of them. We are, instead, maintaining the focus given these events by the major characters at the time of this story.

THINGS STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

Because of the way this story unfolds, almost all of the background knowledge students might need is skillfully unlocked in the course of the reading. However, the following information is important for students to understand before they listen to and discuss the story. Find out what the class already knows about these things and fill in or correct their information as necessary.

- Many old people lived through World War II.
- Europe is rather small.
- Communists are people who believe in a communist system of government. They can be from any country.
- Ordinary life is disrupted during a war or a revolt.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

Select from the following suggestions one or two that seem most appropriate for getting your class interested in the story to come.

- Have students tell about an interesting story they have heard from a much older person. Have the class discuss what these stories might teach us.
- Talk about how life might change for a kid with a broken arm. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a broken arm?
- Have students discuss how they feel about old people.

NOTE ABOUT VOCABULARY

In this story students are supposed to learn the new words and concepts as Phillip begins to learn them [example: adroit]. However, if students ask for clarification of a word or larger idea suggested by that word, redirect any questions to the rest of the class: "What ideas do you have about what _____is wondering?"

IDEAS SUGGESTED BY THE STORY

- We have much to learn from some old folks.
- Many people become ingenious under trying circumstances.
- People often misuse power.
- Humor helps us in all situations.
- The young and old need each other.
- All people are lonely sometimes.
- All people, young and old, are a combination of noble and not so noble traits.
- Some of the most valuable lessons we learn are not learned in school.
- Sometimes older people need to be cared for in senior citizen homes.
- All people sometimes need physical, emotional, and medical help.
- Old people did NOT begin life being old.
- Different kinds of wars and struggles have occurred frequently.
- Every person is interesting in some way.
- Even old people can have stereotypes about old people.
- Often people who are willing to stereotype others do not like to be stereotyped themselves.

DAY 1

Set up the Story	This may require a separate day.
Read	PAGES 73-80.
Question	**What kind of a person do you think Phillip was?** **What evidence do you have for believing this?**
Class Activity	(On a large retrieval chart labeled "Phillip at the Beginning of the Story," record students' ideas about two headings: "What kind of a person was Phillip" and "What in the story caused you to believe this about Phillip." Save this chart to compare with a chart students will develop at the end of the story.)

DAY 2

Read PAGES 81-87, "If you come, I will" at the bottom of page.

Question **What kind of a person do you think Miss Ilona is?**

Possible Followups

Do you know anyone like Miss Ilona? How is that person like Miss Ilona?

How are you different from Miss Ilona?

Question **Why won't Miss Ilona finish her story?**

Possible Followup

What might cause Miss Ilona to want Phillip to return?

Question **Why does Miss Ilona feel the way she does about the Beige and Grays?**

Possible Followup

Why would Miss Ilona choose the colors beige and gray to describe the other older people?

DAY 3

Read PAGE 87, last line, through PAGE 95, first paragraph, ". . . we made good progress on her story."

Questions **What are you learning from the story Miss Ilona is telling?**

What are you learning about Miss Ilona from the way she is telling the story?

What are you learning about Phillip from the way he treats Miss Ilona?

Possible Followup Why is Miss Ilona pleased to have Phillip feed her even when he is clumsy?

Question **Why was Miss Ilona especially glad to see Phillip at the when she woke up from a nap just as he was tiptoing away?**

DAY 4

Read PAGE 95, "I had been governess . . . ," through PAGE 101, the second paragraph, ". . . and I ducked out the fire exit."

Question **What kind of relationship do you think Miss Ilona and Phillip are developing?**

Possible Followups

What evidence do we have that their relationship is now more than just recording the story?

Why doesn't Phillip tell Miss Ilona when she annoys him?

Question **For what reasons does Miss Ilona want Phillip to record only her history?**

Possible Followup

How do you think she feels about being beige or gray?

Question **For what reasons do you think Phillip is making promises to Mr. Malin even though Miss Ilona may not like it?**

DAY 5

Read PAGE 101, "The next day I thought," through PAGE 112.

Question **How do you see Phillip changing?**

Possible Followups

How does he feel about the Whites?

How does he feel about his own insensitive treatment of Mrs. Silverman?

Questions **How is Miss Ilona changing?**

What has Phillip learned about boringness that Miss Ilona needs to learn?

Possible Followup

In what ways can young people teach older persons?

DAY 6

Read PAGES 113-118.

Questions

Why might a young person and an old person both be prejudiced toward older people?

How did Phillip's ideas influence Miss Ilona?

How did Miss Ilona's ideas influence Phillip?

How do you think the home might change because of Phillip's visits?

CONNECTIONS

Select from the following activities those best suited to your students. Some of the activities "connect" students personally to aspects of the story, some activities connect the story to the larger world, and some connect poetry with ideas expressed in the story.

For the Whole Class

Retrieval Chart #2. On a chart labeled "Phillip at the End of the Story," record students' ideas about two headings: "What kind of a person is Phillip now" and "What caused this." Have students compare this chart with their first chart. Discuss Phillip's growth!

Photo Montages. Have students make three class magazine-photo montages. One should be of the young alone. One of the old alone. One of old and young together. For each montage have students list all of the places where we might find each kind of group. Have students analyze the similarities and differences in the lists.

For Small Groups

Lost. In groups of two have students study the poem "Lost." Have them list the ways they think that the poem may be true and the ways they think it may not be true. After everyone has finished, have the groups share their opinions with the class.

LOST

Lost, yesterday, somewhere
between sunrise and sunset
two golden hours
each set with sixty
diamond minutes.
No reward is offered
for they are gone forever.

Anonymous

How Does It Feel To Be Old? Over a few days read aloud at least twice the book-format poem "How Does It Feel To Be Old?" (by Norma Farber, available in paperback, E.P. Dutton). Have the class discuss their impressions of the grandmother in the poem. Then divide the class into nine groups. Assign each group one of the nine parts of the poem (each part begins "How does it feel..."). Ask each group to discuss their part and make brief notes about what the grandmother liked about being old and why they think she liked those things. Ask them to discuss and make brief notes about what she did not like and why. Then ask them to look at the things she did not like and decide which of those things have to happen because of old age and which things might be changed if others were more sensitive to older folks. Reassemble the class and have a discussion about their group conclusions.

Letters. Have each student choose one of the people at the home and imagine being that person. Have students stay in character and each write a letter to Phillip describing how he or she felt about a visit Phillip made to him or her at the home. Have pairs of students exchange their letters and each write Phillip's imagined response to the partner's letter. Display the letters in pairs. Some of the results are surprising!

Partner Poem. Have partners work with the following format to write a blank verse poem:

Both young and old

(students write line)

But

(students write line)

Samples (from fifth-graders):

Both young and old
ask a lot of questions
But
the old have more answers.

Both young and old
like to eat
But
the young choose pizza more!

Both young and old
like kids
But
the old can like their very own.

For Students Working Individually

True Stories. Have each student write a short, true story about an experience he or she has had with an older person. The stories should be bound together to make a classroom book.

Poetry Search. Have students make a collection of existing poems about youth, old age, or both. Create a classroom anthology.

RELATED BOOKS

MacLachlan, Patricia

Arthur, For the Very First Time
Harper and Row, 1980
Arthur, a timid, 10-year-old city kid, spends a summer gaining self-confidence on the farm of his unconventional elderly relatives.

Miles, Miska

Annie and the Old One
Little, Brown, 1971
Young Annie enjoys her Navajo world. She helps watch the sheep, carries pails of water to the cornfield, and goes to school every day on the bus. Most of all, she enjoys the time spent with her grandmother, "the old one." One evening her grandmother tells the family, "My children, when the new rug is taken from the loom, I will go to mother earth." The remainder of the story is a description of the beautiful relationship between Annie and her grandmother and Annie's attempts to slow down the progress of the rugmaking.

Skorpen, Liesel

Grace
Harper and Row, 1984
Lonely Sara's friendship with newcomer Amy – dubbed "Riffraff" by her classmates – gets her into trouble in the surburban community where she has lived all her life. She and Amy play a cruel trick on the "old witch" next door. When Sara is forced by her mother to apologize, she meets an old woman who is lonely, helpless, afraid, and slowly deteriorating mentally. Out of pity Sara helps her, but keeps her actions a secret. As the story progresses toward the old woman's death, an unusual but very believable relationship develops between Sara and the old woman – quiet, sad, and yet also heartwarming.

Streich, Corrine

Grandparents' Houses: Poems About Grandparents
Greenwillow, 1984
This is a beautiful book of fifteen poems reflecting the different cultural heritages of strong and wise grandparents who pass along their values and an appreciation of their culture to their grandchildren. An unusual anthology that gives grandparents their due.

AT THE HOME / CHARACTER SKETCH

Student reactions, comments, or suggestions:

Parent reactions, comments, or suggestions:

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

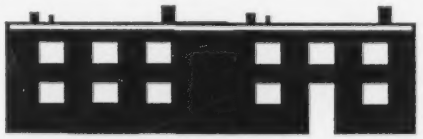
Please return this page and your child's character sketch to school. Thank you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

In class we have been reading a short story, "At the Home," by E. L. Konigsburg, in which the boy Phillip is drawn into a surprising relationship with a cunning old woman, Miss Ilona, who lives at a nursing home. Phillip's experience awakens his compassion as he develops an understanding of older people, and it begins to enlarge his view of the world and his place in it.

This activity is designed to increase your child's understanding of older people and to give your child practice writing a character sketch. Please have your child describe Miss Ilona to you so that you understand her character. Then tell your child about an older person whose character in some way touched your life. Have your child write a character sketch of this person to share with the class.



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Optional Discussion Starters

Understanding Miss Ilona:
Have your child describe Miss Ilona to you.

1. What is her situation now?
   (Where and in what way does she live? How does she feel about her situation?)

2. What do you know about her past life?
   (What experiences did she have? How did they affect her?)

3. For someone who has never met Miss Ilona, what are the most important things to understand about her?
   (What is admirable about her? What is particular to her? Does she have any major faults?)

4. What effect did she have on Phillip?
   (How was Phillip changed by knowing Miss Ilona?)

Understanding Another Elderly Person:
Please describe to your child an elderly person who in some way touched your life.

Writing a Character Sketch

Help your child decide what elements of your description of an elderly person to include in a character sketch that introduces this person to his or her classmates. Have your child write the sketch on a separate piece of paper and bring it to class.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

Robert C. O'Brien

Name _____

Partner's Name _____

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THE SICKNESS OF TIMOTHY FRISBY and MR. AGES
pages 3-19

Partner Activity: Discuss with your partner the things you have learned about each member of the Frisby family. Together record your ideas on *one* chart.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FRISBY FAMILY MEMBERS

Mrs. Frisby
Jonathan Frisby
Teresa Frisby
Martin Frisby
Cynthia Frisby
Timothy Frisby

Partner Discussion: Discuss both of the questions with your partner.

1. Why might we think that Mrs. Frisby is a good mother?

2. Why does Mrs. Frisby seek Mr. Ages's advice?

THE CROW and THE CAT and MR. FITZGIBBON'S PLOW
pages 20-32

Partner Discussion: Discuss with your partner this sentence from page 32:

> She remembered something her husband, Mr. Frisby, used to say: All doors are hard to unlock until you have the key.

Partner Discussion: Discuss these three questions with your partner.

1. **Why would Mrs. Frisby be willing to risk her life for Jeremy?**

2. **Why would Jeremy be willing to risk his life for Mrs. Frisby?**

3. **What would you have done if you had been Mrs. Frisby or Jeremy?**

FIVE DAYS and A FAVOR FROM JEREMY
pages 33-44

Partner Activity: With your partner discuss the problems and concerns that Mrs. Frisby has. Together create *one* list of her problems and concerns.

MRS. FRISBY'S PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

THE OWL and "GO TO THE RATS"
pages 45-60

Partner Discussion: With your partner discuss the following:

Owl was willing to help Mrs. Frisby because her husband had been Jonathan Frisby.

1. **Why might people be treated a special way because of something a relative has done?**

2. **How have you been treated in a special way because of something one of your relatives did?**

IN THE ROSEBUSH and **BRUTUS** and **IN THE LIBRARY**
pages 61-82

Individual Illustration: Mrs. Frisby is seeing and hearing things that are amazing to her. Of course, she sees them from a rat's point of view. Draw a picture of what Mrs. Frisby saw.

ISABELLA and A POWDER FOR DRAGON
pages 83-95

Partner Activity: Discuss with your partner the reasons why Mrs. Frisby should be the one to put the sleeping powder in Dragon's bowl and the reasons why she should not be the one to do it! After you have made some decisions, fill in *one* version of the lists below.

WHY MRS. FRISBY SHOULD DO IT!	WHY MRS. FRISBY SHOULD NOT DO IT!

THE MARKETPLACE and IN THE CAGE
pages 96-111

Partner Discussion: Discuss both of the questions with your partner.

1. **What is the matter with having to live in any kind of a cage?**

2. **What is valuable about being free?**

THE MAZE and A LESSON IN READING
pages 112-128

Partner Activity: With your partner discuss the benefits and burdens of being a laboratory rat at NIMH. After your discussion, cooperate to fill in *one* version of the boxes below.

Benefits of Being a Laboratory Rat

Burdens of Being a Laboratory Rat

Partner Question: Discuss with your partner the following question. Then write your own answer. Read your answer to your partner.

What are the advantages that come with being able to read?

THE AIR DUCTS
pages 129-141

Partner Discussion: Discuss both of the questions with your partner.

1. **On page 137 Jenner says, "We don't know where to go because we don't know what we are." Why is it important to know what you are?**

2. **It was important for the rats and mice to cooperate to gain their freedom. What are the advantages of cooperation?**

THE BONIFACE ESTATE and THE MAIN HALL
pages 142-157

Partner Discussion: Discuss these three questions with your partner.

1. **The rats were good at "stealing" anything they wanted. Why would they want to live by working instead of by stealing?**

2. **How has the rats' ability to read helped them to think of the Plan and helped them to put the Plan into action?**

3. **Why do the other rats look at the rats from NIMH strangely?**

THE TOY TINKER
pages 158-164

Partner Activity: Discuss with your partner your ideas about what a civilization is. Together write what you and your partner think would be a useful description of a civilization.

How My Partner and I Describe a Civilization

THORN VALLEY
pages 165-177

Partner Discussion: Discuss both of the questions with your partner.

1. **How might the rats' lives have been different if the toy tinker had not died in the forest?**

2. **On page 171 it says, "We did not have enough work to do because a thief's life is always based on somebody else's work." What does this mean?**

CAPTURED and **SEVEN DEAD RATS**
pages 178-194

Partner Discussion: Discuss both of the questions with your partner.

1. **In what ways was Mr. Frisby's decision to keep his past a secret from Mrs. Frisby thoughtful and in what ways was it careless?**

2. **Why is the capture of Mrs. Frisby both fortunate and unfortunate?**

ESCAPE and **AT THE MEETING**
pages 195-215

Partner Activity: Create an illustration for either of these chapters. Write a caption for your illustration.

THE DOCTOR
pages 216-226

Partner Discussion: Discuss these three questions with your partner.

1. **What reasons would suggest that the exterminators were from NIMH, and why would they want to kill the rats?**

2. **Many characters in the story acted very bravely. Which two did you most admire for their bravery and why?**

3. **Why, do you think, is starting a new civilization in Thorn Valley worth all of the sadness and despair that the rats seem willing to endure?**

EPILOGUE
pages 227-233

Partner Discussion: Discuss with your partner the ways that Mrs. Frisby's children will be different *because* she told them about the rats of NIMH, about their father, and about her own incredible adventures.

LOOKING BACK AT *MRS. FRISBY AND THE RATS OF NIMH*

Partner Discussion: Talk with your partner about the book. What did you like about it? What didn't you like? What information would help someone else decide whether to read this book?

Individual Review: Write three paragraphs reviewing this book for other readers. Tell them what they can expect to like about it and what they might dislike about it. Describe how this book compares with books you have especially liked. Give the book an overall rating (from 1 to 10) and justify your rating.

With Your Partner

Time Line: Think back over the main events of the story. Discuss with your partner what the most important events are in this book. Collaborate with your partner in putting the events on index cards, one event per card. Then put the cards in the order in which the events took place in the *rats'* lives. This will not be exactly the same order that the events were told about in the book. (Remember, the story jumps all around in time!) Make a time line by transferring the information on your index cards to a long strip of adding-machine tape. Add illustrations to go with the events. Display your time line.

On Your Own

Appropriate Housing: In *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH,* the rats wanted a world—including houses—that was suited to their needs. From the library, get the book by George Mendoza, *Need a House? Call Ms. Mouse!* Ms. Mouse is an architect who designs houses that are wonderfully appropriate for her clients. Look at Ms. Mouse's delightful houses. Think about a house for yourself. Be an architect and design a house that reflects your view of the world, your values, and your needs.

Thorn Valley—After a While! Pretend that Martin does get his wish. He gets Jeremy to fly him to Thorn Valley, and he does visit with the rats, and he does learn all about what has happened. Pretend that you are Martin after that visit. Write down what you will tell your mother, Timothy, Teresa, and Cynthia when you return from your visit.

A Parting Question: WHAT IS NIMH?

RELATED BOOKS

Adams, Richard

Watership Down
Macmillan, 1974
This is a book for grown-ups and children to share. Like the NIMH rats, these rabbits work to create an ideal home. They brave the elements, conquer their own fears, and encounter hostile rabbits while seeking freedom.

Bishop, Claire

Twenty and Ten
Puffin, 1968
In this story twenty French children, ten Jewish refugee children, and one nun cooperate to protect the Jewish children from the Nazi terrorists.

Brunford, Sheila

The Incredible Journey
Little, Brown, 1961
A cat and two dogs cooperate to return through hazardous country to their home and human friends. They maintain the integrity of their breeds' characteristics while working together in a humorous and convincing way.

Sharp, Margery

The Rescuers
Little, Brown, 1959
Three clever and civilized mice form the Prisoners' Aid Society wish to actively create a world in which justice will prevail. The mice, like the NIMH mice, show shrewdness, warmth, and humor. Their willingness to cooperate helps during their harrowing adventures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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[2] 1978 by Valerie Worth for "Mice," from *Still More Small Poems.*

Frog and Toad Are Friends

by Arnold Lobel

Partner Reading
Suggested Grade Range: 1-2

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

The five stories in this book chronicle the adventures of Frog and Toad—two good friends who would do almost anything for each other.

Each story is presented as an independent partner reading lesson with accompanying class and partner activities. In addition, activities related to the book as a whole are collected at the end of the series of lessons.

DRAFT
WARNING DO NOT PHOTOCOPY

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"Spring"

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

Spring has arrived, and Frog is eager to awaken Toad, who has been sleeping all winter. Frog tries to tempt Toad with stories of the fun they will have together, but he finally resorts to trickery to get Toad out of bed.

THINGS STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

- Students should be familiar with the months of the year and the concept of calendars and calendar pages.

- Find out what children know about why certain animals (such as bears, insects, snakes, frogs, and toads) sleep through the winter. You may want to follow up with an introductory activity related to hibernation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

- If necessary, introduce the concept of hibernation. Explain that in parts of the world where winter is a time of cold weather and scarce food, some animals sleep, or hibernate, for several months. Some, like bears, go into caves; others, like frogs and certain fish, settle at the bottom of ponds. Toads usually dig into the earth or hide themselves in leaves or in a hollow log. When animals hibernate, their body processes slow down. They breathe very slowly, and they do not need food until they wake up. (A resource book on hibernation is listed in the Related Books section of this unit.)

  Tell students that in this story one animal is not quite ready to get up from his winter's nap.

- After discussing hibernation, you might want to read the following poem. Ask who might be speaking in the poem.

IN THE SUMMER WE EAT

In the summer we eat,
in the winter we don't;
In the summer we'll play,
in the winter we won't.
All winter we sleep, each curled up
As soon as the snowflakes start,
But in spring we each come out
And start to eat all over again.

Zhenya Gay[1]

DAY 1

Teacher Reads Aloud

Read the story aloud to the students.

Class Discussion

Give students an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Class and Partner Activity

Have the untitled poem below written on the board. Read it through several times with the class. Talk with the class about the ways the brothers in the poem are like Frog and Toad. Have partners role-play the scene in the poem. Have them think about how the awake brother is feeling as well as about what he is doing. Have them think about the different ways the sleeping brother may respond.

Wind whispers through the window
and wakes me up. Tree leaves
bump the screen. A bee
buzzes. A squirrel laughs.
I can see the sun.
My brother doesn't hear the noises.
I think I'll wake him up.

Richard Margolis[2]

DAY 2

Teacher Reads Aloud

Have partners take turns reading aloud.

Partner Activity

Have partners tell each other about a time when they woke someone because they wanted company. Have each child draw an illustration of his or her partner's story.

Class Discussion

Ask students to talk about how their reading went and how they helped each other.

Have several students tell the class the story of the illustration they made of their partner waking someone up.

Questions
(Use the indented "backup" questions only if students fail to get the point of the original question.)

Why was Frog so excited about getting Toad out of bed?

What was he looking forward to?

What did he want to do with Toad?

Why didn't Frog just enjoy the springtime by himself?

How did Toad feel when Frog was trying to get him up?

How do you think Frog felt when he tricked Toad?

How do you feel about the trick Toad played?

How did Toad feel when he finally got up and stayed up?

How did he feel about being with Frog?

Show students the picture on page 15. Ask:
How do you think the two friends are feeling now?

What might they be thinking about?

"THE STORY"

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

One day Frog isn't feeling well and he asks Toad to tell him a story while he rests. Toad, unable to think of a story, tries all sorts of ways to think of one—including banging his head against the wall. Now Toad isn't feeling well! The two friends switch roles: Toad goes to bed, and Frog tells him a story based on Toad's antics!

SUGGESTION FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

Introduce the story by asking students when they like to have a story read to them. Ask them to name some of their favorite stories. Ask them what stories they know by heart that they could tell to a friend or younger sister or brother.

DAY 1

Teacher Reads Aloud	Read the story aloud to the students.
Class Discussion	Give students an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.
Student Activity	Have students draw a book cover for a favorite story they would like to read or tell to a sick friend.

DAY 2

Partner Reading	Have partners take turns reading aloud to each other.
Partner Activity	Have partners make small wordless accordion books together. These books are made by drawing on small pieces of paper a sequence of four to six pictures that tell a story. The pictures are then taped together with cellophane or masking tape "hinges" so that they fold like an accordion. Partners should decide first what their story will be about and plan who will draw each picture. The books can be kept in class and sent home to students who are sick for more than a day.

DAY 3

Class Discussion

Ask students to describe how the reading went and how their partners helped them.

Ask a few students to tell the class the story in their accordion book. Each partner can tell the parts of the story represented by the pictures he or she drew.

Questions
(Use the indented "backup" question only if students fail to get the point of the original question.)

What kind things did Toad do as soon as he noticed that Frog looked sick?

Why do you think Toad did these things?

How does he feel about Frog?

Why do you think Toad tried so hard to think of a story?

How do you think Frog felt when he saw how hard Toad was trying to think of a story?

How did Frog help Toad when Toad felt sick?

How are Frog and Toad different?
How are they alike? (Help children focus on the characters' personalities rather than their physical characteristics.)

What did you enjoy about this story?

Family Activity

After students have read the story in class, send home the related Family Activity and a copy of the book. When students return the activity, have them share some of the things they discussed wih their parents.

"A Lost Button"

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

Toad and Frog go for a long walk and when they return, Toad discovers that he has lost a button. Frog tries to help Toad as they retrace their steps, but Toad becomes irritated with Frog when they find all sorts of buttons except Toad's. Toad feels sheepish about his bad behavior when he returns home and finds the button was there all along.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

- Read students the title of the story and ask them to describe what they think the story might be about.
- Ask students to tell about a time they lost something that was important to them.

DAY 1

Teacher Reads Aloud	Read the story aloud to students.
Class Discussion	Give students a chance to make comments and ask questions.

DAY 2

Teacher Reads Aloud

Have partners take turns reading the story aloud to each other.

Partner Activity

Have partners make two lists of the different feelings that Frog felt and that Toad felt through each part of the story. Have one partner write down the words for Frog and the other partner write down the words for Toad.

Class Discussion

Ask students to describe how the reading and partner activity went. Have them read from their lists of Frog's and Toad's feelings.

Questions
(Use the indented "backup" questions only if students fail to get the point of the original question.)

Why do you think Frog offered to help Toad look for his button?

How did Toad behave when he was looking for his button?

Why do you think he acted that way?

How did Toad feel when he finally found his button?

How did he feel about the way he had treated Frog?

Why do you think Toad gave his jacket to Frog?

How did Frog feel when Toad gave him the jacket?

What makes you think so?

"A Swim"

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

Unlike his peers, Toad swims in a bathing suit. But when he and Frog go for a swim at the river, Toad doesn't want Frog or any of the other animals to see him because he "looks funny" in a bathing suit. The animals are tantalized by the possibility of seeing something so funny, and when Toad finally comes out of the water, everybody—including Frog—laughs.

Special Considerations. There is no perfect resolution of Toad's discomfort in this story. However, he seems to survive his self-consciousness. It may not appear very "nice" of the animals to laugh at Toad; on the other hand it is a natural outcome of the situation Toad has set up. In this story, we get a bit more insight into Toad's quirky personality.

SUGGESTION FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

Tell students a personal story about a time you had to wear something you felt funny in. Invite students to share their own stories about having to wear something they really didn't like—or felt funny wearing. Then tell them that in this story, someone is very embarrassed about what he is wearing.

DAY 1

Teacher Reads Aloud

Read the story aloud to the students.

Class Discussion

Give students an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Read the untitled poem below to the class. Have students discuss how the poem is similar to this story and how it is different.

Sometimes
when I'm teased
I don't cry,
I go away.
When I come back
they're doing something else.
I remember.
They forget.

Richard Margolis[3]

DAY 2

Partner Reading

Have partners take turns reading aloud to each other.

Partner Activity

Have partners look at the picture on pages 50 and 51 and talk together about what Toad and Frog are each thinking and feeling. Have each pair of students write one sentence about what Toad is thinking and one sentence about what Frog is thinking.

DAY 3

Class Discussion

Ask students to describe how the reading went and how their partners helped them. Ask some students to read their sentences.

Questions

Why did Toad make it a big deal that no one should see him in his bathing suit?

What do you imagine Frog thought when Toad asked him not to look?

In what ways did Frog act differently from the other animals who wanted to see Toad in his bathing suit? How might you explain this?

In what ways did Frog act the same as the other animals. How might you explain this?

How did Toad seem to feel when all the animals laughed?

What do you think Toad will do the next time he goes swimming?

What would you do if you were Toad?

"The Letter"

SYNOPSIS (for the teacher)

Toad is feeling very sad because he never gets any mail. Frog commiserates and runs home to write a letter to Toad. He gives it to a snail to deliver, then dashes back to wait with Toad for its arrival. Toad is joyous to hear what Frog has done, and the two friends don't even mind the four-day wait for the snail.

SUGGESTION FOR INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children whether they like to get mail. Ask them what kinds of things they get in the mail, and what they like best to receive.

DAY 1

Teacher Reads Aloud — Read the story aloud to the students.

Class Discussion — Give students an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Class Activity — Make a class poem called "Best Friends." Have children write sentences beginning with "Best friends. . ." and finishing with phrases that tell what best friends do. It might be helpful to start students off with an example, such as, "Best friends share their things with each other." Combine children's sentences into a poem.

DAY 2

Partner Reading — Have partners take turns reading aloud to each other.

Partner Activity — Have partners make index-card postcards for each other with a sentence telling one thing they like about their partner. Ask all students to learn how to spell their partner's name and write it on the card in the place for the address. Have them illustrate or decorate the card.

DAY 3

Class Discussion

Ask students to describe how the reading went and how their partners helped them.

Ask some students to read the postcard they wrote to their partner.

Questions (Use the indented "backup" questions only if students fail to get the point of the original question.)

Why do you think Toad was so sad that he never got a letter?

Why did Frog hurry home to write Toad a letter?

How do you think he felt when Toad was so sad?

How do you think Frog felt while he was writing the letter? What might he have been thinking?

How did Toad feel when Frog told him about the letter?

Why do you think Frog told Toad what was in the letter before it came?

When the two friends were sitting on Toad's front porch waiting for the letter, what might they have been thinking about?

Family Activity

Send home the Family Activity and a copy of the book. After students return the activity, have volunteers share their letters. Mail the letters.

WAYS TO LISTEN

We Could Be Friends. Read aloud to students the poem "We Could Be Friends." Ask students how the poem reminds them of Frog and Toad.

WE COULD BE FRIENDS

We could be friends
Like friends are supposed to be.
You, picking up the telephone
Calling me

to come over and play
or take a walk,
finding a place
to sit and talk,

Or just goof around
Like friends do.
Me, picking up the telephone
Calling you.

Myra Cohn Livingston[4]

ALWAYS WRITE

Lost Button Feelings Poem. Using the word lists students generated after reading "A Lost Button," construct a group poem to describe Frog's and Toad's feelings. On the board, write a vertical column (see below) alternating "Frog" and "Toad," so that each character's name appears at least five times. Have children take turns providing a "feeling word" for Frog, then Toad. Ask them to think of the feelings in the other stories and include feelings that haven't already been mentioned. The poem will look like this:

Frog happy
Toad sad
Frog sorry
Toad angry
Frog pleased,
etc.

When they are finished, have the children read the poem aloud in chorus with feeling!

ANOTHER LOOK

Butcher Paper Pals. Draw or have children draw giant versions of Frog and Toad on butcher paper. Features or whole bodies can be painted with poster paint. Tape the figures up on a wall. Have each child think of a word he or she associates with one of the characters, write the word on a post-it or self-adhesive label and stick it on the appropriate character.

RELATED BOOKS

Buck, Margaret Waring	**Where They Go in Winter** Abingdon Press, 1968 This is a highly informative but simply written resource on hibernation. Selected pages could be read to children.
Lobel, Arnold	**Frog and Toad Together; Days with Frog and Toad** Harper, 1972, 1979 More adventures in "I Can Read" text.
Marshall, James	**George and Martha (. . . Encore; Rise and Shine; Tons of Fun; Round and Round)** Houghton Mifflin, 1972-1988 Two hippos who are dearest of friends have several humorous adventures in each of the books in this series. The George and Martha books are relatively easy reading for younger children.
Steig, William	**Amos & Boris**[CDP Unit] Puffin Books, 1977 A mouse and a whale become unlikely friends.
Vincent, Gabrielle	**Ernest and Celestine** Greenwillow Books, 1982 This is the first in a series of stories translated from the French about a bear and a mouse who have a wonderful time together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are currently in the process of requesting permission to reproduce the following copyright material:

[1] "In the Summer We Eat," by Zhenya Gay.
[2] "Wind whispers through the window," by Richard Margolis.
[3] "Sometimes," by Richard Margolis.
[4] "We Could Be Friends," by Myra Cohn Livingston.

"THE LETTER"

Briefly describe your child's reaction to this activity:

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

Please return this page and the story to school.
Thank you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

Reading is a complex skill that requires lots of practice. Having your child read aloud to you can help him or her become a better reader. Discussing the story with you afterwards can help improve your child's understanding of what he or she has read. In addition, reading together can provide both of you with an opportunity to share some special time together.

This week's family activity begins with a story from Arnold Lobel's book *Frog and Toad Are Friends.* In this story, Frog notices that his friend Toad is looking sad. He asks Toad to tell him what is the matter. Toad says, "This is my sad time of day. It is the time when I wait for the mail to come. It always makes me very unhappy...because I never get any mail."

Please have your child read "The Letter" to you. Some of the words are difficult and you may have to help with them. After your child has read the story, talk together about things that friends can do to make each other happy.

If you know a friend or relative who would appreciate a short note, take some time to write one with your child. This will not only give your child valuable experience reading and writing, but will also demonstrate the importance of reaching out to others and showing that we care about them.

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Discussion Starters

1. Tell each other what you liked best about the story. What is it that makes Frog an especially good friend?

2. Talk about how it can feel to get a card or letter from a friend.

   If you know a friend or relative who would especially enjoy hearing from you, take some time to write a short note to that person with your child.

"THE STORY"

Briefly describe your child's reaction to this activity:

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

Parent's signature _____

Teacher's name _____ Date _____

Please return this page and the book to school.
Thank you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Dear Parents,

One of the best ways you can help your child learn to read is to spend time listening to him or her read. There are many excellent books to choose from. Some of the most popular are Arnold Lobel's stories about the adventures of Frog and Toad (part of the I CAN READ series published by Harper & Row.)

This week's family activity is a story from Lobel's book *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. It is a humorous account of how Toad tries to comfort his sick friend by telling him a story. The only problem is that Toad can't think of a good story to tell!

Please have your child read "The Story" aloud to you. Some of the words will be difficult, so you might need to help with them. Questions are provided to help structure a family discussion. By listening to the story and discussing it afterwards, you can help your child improve his or her oral language skills as well as his or her reading skills.

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Discussion Starters

1. Take turns telling what you liked about the story.

2 Discuss some of the things that make Frog and Toad especially good friends.

3. Tell each other some of the things you like to do when you are sick. Is reading or hearing a story one of them?

4. Take turns telling each other some nice things you could do for a friend who is sick. Make a list of your favorite ideas on the facing page.

Things to do for a Sick Friend

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.